

Board of Trade, Department of Science and Art.

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AN



# INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

ON THE

MUSEUM OF ORNAMENTAL ART OF THE  
DEPARTMENT.

By J. C. ROBINSON, F.S.A. &c.



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## INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

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IN an introductory lecture "On the Educational Uses of Museums," recently delivered at the Museum of Practical Geology, it was said, in the outset, "The School of Applied Sciences here established, is the only instance in Britain of an organised Instructional Institution arising out of a Museum."\* Substantially the case of the Museum of Ornamental Art at Marlborough House is the converse of this. *It has arisen out of an Instructional Institution*, as others have done before, and I do not think this origin is less significant than the former;—both instances, in fact, tacitly indicate the necessity which exists for the alliance of all direct teaching with what may be termed *objective experience*, that is to say, an actual acquaintance with the monuments or productions of Art or Science, as the case

\* Introductory Lecture, by Professor E. Forbes.



may be; and it is satisfactory to find that the two institutions, commencing as they have done from opposite points of departure, nevertheless respectively recognise this fact.

The Museum of Ornamental Art was originally founded as an integral part of the educational establishment at Marlborough House; but whatever may have been the precise intention at the period of its first formation, whether limited to this end or not, it was at all events soon found to recommend itself to the general public, and was understood to be intended quite as specially for their benefit as for that of the professional Art student. It is under these two aspects that I purpose offering a few remarks. In the first place then we may ask; Of what actual use is this Museum, viewed as part of the direct instructional system of the Department? and secondly; What is its scope and province in the work of elevating the standard of taste, and knowledge of Ornamental Art in the country generally? From the first a very practical bias has been given to the Department of Science and Art, and the part of its organisation now under notice will be no exception to the rule: it is evident, therefore, that all ideas of the Museum as a merely curious exhibition should be at once dismissed. In founding and augmenting the several collections the intention has not been the merely adding a new *lion* to the metropolis. On the one hand, it was early perceived that the teach-

ing of specialties must necessarily be incomplete without a simultaneous familiarity with the actual specimens alluded to in the classes; and, on the other, it was thought to be in vain to expect the public to appreciate the superior results achieved, unless the objects proposed as standards of excellence in the system could be likewise set before them for their guidance in estimating the progress made. In short, it was justly felt that the education of the industrial artist and that of the public should go hand in hand. Let us see how far this is or has been the case heretofore. By a thousand imperceptible channels, the artist engaged in the actual work of study, whilst necessarily acquiring the requisite amount of executive ability, likewise raises himself to the level of the period as regards the general art idea; he may not, for himself and on his own account, have traced out and followed the gradual development of Art, but he takes it as he finds it, the concrete legacy of all that have gone before him, the relative sensitiveness or obtuseness of his perceptive faculties enabling him to understand this legacy more or less well. Such is the process as regards the artist in most cases at the present day; but the collections of a Museum, embracing a progressive series of manifestations from the earliest periods, and at the same time a commensurate selection of contemporary works, would afford the *means and opportunity*, at any rate, for a sounder and more natural process than this: the proper use of these means would

conduct the Art student, by clear and definite steps, to the upward level of his own time, rendering him familiar with every link of the chain of gradual development, enabling him to profit by the true inventions and progress of contemporary mind, and at the same time to detect and avoid the spurious affectations of originality, the empty revivals and false adaptations, which are so rife in modern Art; and, on the contrary even, by retrospection, to recover again those passages, motives or ideas, which in the lapse of time or by adverse accidents have, as it were, been lost by the wayside, and borne no fruit to posterity.

Such is a faint indication of the relation of the Museum to the Art student. But the public, who do *not* study, who know nothing of the cumulative Art idea, except as it is presented to them in its present state, how and why are they to be influenced? The manufacturer, who controls and directs the artist, caters for the public; and, in fact, is now the real arbiter in Industrial Art, being not more learned than his customer, and far less so than the artist or designer, whom he is supposed to guide by spur and rein,—*that, too often, empty fashion,—this, caprice.* How is Art teaching to be brought home to him? Clearly to the great mass of the people—I mean the present generation of adults—and to manufacturers, the usual machinery of Art education is inapplicable,—at least in the present temper of society, though the next generation will be doubtless more favourably situated in this respect.



But, in the meantime, whilst the fact is obvious that the public is very ignorant in these matters, and that active teaching is impracticable, what is there to trust to but the silent refining influence of the monuments of Art themselves?—Render such on all hands accessible to the people, and a passive teaching will be the result, scarcely less effectual than the active study, which we admit it is in vain to expect them to take in hand.

But it may be said that Museums are no new thing in this metropolis—a great national collection, the British Museum, has been accessible to the public for nearly a century. Why has it not wrought a manifest change in public taste? A large proportion of its collections have more or less directly reference to Art, and it has been at all times eagerly visited by the public. Certain it is, that it would be somewhat difficult to formularise or define the sort of influence exercised by it on the public mind. It is, however, extraordinary how much and how strongly the avowed object of an institution influences its practical utility. The British Museum has never been specially regarded as an Art-teaching Institution; not that those who have knowledge and instruction in Art have not always recognised, and made good use of, the vast accumulation of treasures within its walls: but such persons do not require to be reminded of the objects of a museum; to them the monuments of Art appeal with unmistakeable voices, whether *in* or *out* of place, from no matter what incon-

gruous juxtaposition : but to the general public it is to be feared that our great national collection has been, and is, but a collection of curiosities in every possible department—a dormant, passive institution, exercising no appreciable influence—at any rate, in the matter of Art teaching. People return from their holiday visits with a confused spectrum of birds and beasts, stones and shells, old marbles, vases, books, prints, &c. floating in their minds, leaving an imposing impression of vast variety and wealth, but with little other definite result.

Let me not be understood here as insinuating either sarcasm or reproach, for it is true that it becomes a serious question whether the nation, following the example of other countries, should not always endeavour to maintain and keep together, as a vast imposing unity, a one great National Museum, to serve as a kind of storehouse or encyclopædia of all things legitimately collectable. This question is now being seriously mooted : it does not, however, affect my argument now. In almost every country the necessity for museums of specialties has at the same time been recognised : indeed, the conviction is now universal, that definite appreciable results can only be expected from undertakings, the intention and objects of which are avowed from the first, and kept in view in every detail ; and we ourselves even, as a step in this direction, have long had an incipient Museum of Fine Art—the National Gallery.



Now the Museum of this Department has a specialty : its province is to take cognisance of the Arts decorative—of Art in its connexion with production ; and its main object is active and direct teaching—to make all its collections specifically useful—to bring home and render familiar to all, the various developments of Ornamental Art, which have arisen and are still being produced,—to enhance the value of all acquisitions by means of descriptive catalogues, monographs, and illustrative lectures,—in short, to render, as far as possible, the acquiring of a certain amount of useful knowledge inevitably consequent on every visit to the collection ; and lastly, by the judicious arrangement and juxtaposition of specimens for comparison, to facilitate the deduction of those abstract laws and principles, a proper acquaintance with which is the foundation of all true knowledge. Betwixt the two descriptions of collections there is, in fact, just the same difference as exists betwixt the comprehensive special treatise and the encyclopædia, the latter having a precise analogy with the old miscellaneous collections. Let me now call attention for a brief space to these latter. In nearly all public museums hitherto, certain special classes of objects have, by common consent, been deemed legitimate subjects for collection, whilst, at the same time, numerous others have been neglected as unworthy of concern ; and it has unluckily happened, that the things thus disregarded were, in many cases,

just those which would have been the most useful and suggestive to the designer and the manufacturer. In the class of metal works, for instance, there are numerous national collections of arms and armour; all museums have collections of antique bronzes, and in some there is a sprinkling of mediæval or renaissance goldsmiths' work, though these latter objects are generally few in number, and are classed with the general mass of heterogeneous things, heaped together without system in some obscure and seldom-visited saloon: but of the innumerable objects of pure utility, to which Art has lent superadded interest, there are few traces. The wrought and chiselled productions of the middle ages, the bronzes and delicate carvings of Italy and Germany, the inlaid metal-work and filagree-work of the East, the different kinds of chased and repoussé articles, the beautiful process of niello, and the admirable and most varied productions in personal ornaments, delicate elaborations of a Cellini, a Caradosso, or a De Brie, these are almost invariably wanting. With the division of textile fabrics, including lace and embroidery, museums have literally never concerned themselves, a few tapestries in some of the palaces and ancient show-houses of the nobility being all that has been hitherto available to the public: indeed I know of no attempt, except in our own case, to form a textile collection. An inspection of the numerous and beautiful oriental and mediæval fabrics we have brought

together, within a few brief months, will nevertheless show how effective and how interesting such a collection may be made.

In ceramic manufactures, the ancient potteries of Greece and Rome, the so-called Etruscan and Samian wares, and a few mis-shapen aboriginal examples, form the staple of most museums; and yet, what an infinitely wider field might be opened in this province alone! Furniture again, carving in wood, ivory, &c. and the numerous cognate developments of which Oriental Art affords so many interesting specimens, these are very generally neglected, or at best perversely jumbled into so-called Ethnographical collections, whose ambiguous and medley character is such as to overwhelm any special interest isolated specimens may possess. In the section of glass and enamels, the collections are in most cases confined to the rare, scanty, and rudimentary works of the ancients, in which a few phials and lachrymatories, or rudely-manufactured, particoloured vases, have been purchased at enormous prices, and descanted upon with a particularity which their importance is far from warranting; whilst the exquisitely beautiful glasses of Venice, and the crystals and enamelled goblets of Bohemia and Holland, are passed over entirely unnoticed. In like manner the enamels of the East, of Limoges, and other mediæval manufactures, are completely ignored in the contemplation of a few rudely-formed fibulæ, grossly bedizened by



Gallo-Roman semi-savages. Doubtless the contemplation of such objects as these last enumerated, very ancient and very classical, though often barbarous and ugly things, has a sort of fascination for the cultivated mind,—the antique will ever be a name of power, and a charm to the true artist, not less than to the learned antiquary; the very amount of learning and of comment on all its known developments has given to it a dignity and a sort of legitimate prescription, which I, for one, would be ever earnest in upholding: but still I cannot help thinking, that this ancient and well-reputed bias is somewhat unreasonably exclusive. Though I would not sacrifice one iota of regard for ancient Art, or antique things generally, yet let us not blindly refuse to discriminate, and, in judging betwixt Art on the one hand and mere curious Antiquity on the other, lose sight of the fact that Art is, by its very nature, of far higher value than mere handiwork, even if a Dædalus or a Tubal-Cain were the craftsman. Above all things a true artist or a true connoisseur is bound to be catholic in his taste; he should so train his mind as to perceive and appreciate the beautiful, and to rank it above all else in the scale of consideration.

From this point of view then it follows, that the things I have enumerated, and which are nearly always wanting in museums, are quite as important as their present average contents; in short, it is time that all antiquated prejudices as to the precise

and orthodox categories of collections should be done away with. The museums of the present day will have to respond to the wants of classes with whom to connect them in any way it was formerly deemed an absurdity. Twenty years ago even the most clear-headed and uncompromising advocate of progress would have thought it necessary to apologise for the apparently Utopian opinion, that workmen and manufacturers could have any practical business with museums; they were for the learned few or the aimless holiday-making many—a sealed book or a vulgar show.

That a certain pedantic exclusiveness has too often prevailed in the scheme of museums hitherto, is I think evident, the tendency of this being to confine their usefulness within comparatively narrow limits. With reference to this fact it happens, that our Museum is happily circumstanced, inasmuch as it will naturally take cognisance, and that immediately, of most of the neglected classes of objects previously enumerated; and preference will, doubtless, be given in the immediate acquisitions of objects, not only to those which are most likely to prove the most instructive, but in some degree also the most interesting from their novelty. From this view it will result, that ornamental works of the mediæval and more recent periods will form the chief, though not exclusive staple of the collection during its present organisation; to the former of these divisions I purpose

reverting again, but the mention of recent periods brings us to the consideration of a new and prominent feature,—it is that of the systematic collecting and gathering into museums of *contemporary works*. The Great Exhibition of 1851, which was the immediate parent of our collection, exercised considerable influence in a direction, which has not yet perhaps been adequately appreciated; as a natural consequence of the assembling together of such a vast variety of contemporary works from every part of the world, not only were increased dignity and consideration given to modern Industrial Art, but at the same time this influence dispelled much of that spurious and affected esteem for mediocre works of former epochs, which has always been the bane of the mere collector. People were led to think, and, in some degree, analyse their sensations in judging of art developments; the result of which has been, that more dispassionate views are beginning to prevail as to the paramount claims of the element of Art over all other considerations. It was, moreover, felt that Art had still vitality, that it still possessed the living principle of growth and new development, and that, consequently, its manifestations were proportionably as estimable as all previous ones; and the collector, clinging to rarity and antiquity as the sole estimable qualities, whilst compelled to admire modern works for their intrinsic excellence, was under the necessity of admitting that the former qualities would soon be self-



induced ; at all events, he was led to recognise and allow for that natural propensity of the human heart, which counsels reverence for precedent works, and whilst fully recognising the utility even of this sentiment, at the same time to guard against its undue preponderance. Considerations such as these then have gradually undermined the prejudice, which undoubtedly did exist against the admission of modern works into museums strictly so called. A permanent museum, it is true, will always differ from such a temporary institution as the Great Exhibition. Museums, for instance, can scarcely be expected to take cognisance of the merely mercantile element ; value, profit and loss, and similar economical considerations, being clearly the special and individual concern of the manufacturer and trader, the object of the former is legitimately confined within more abstract limits : in the case of our own Museum, to the illustration of abstract technical and artistic excellence. The Great Exhibition, on the contrary, had evidently a direct commercial or economic import ; this was a feature special to it : but although this was fully recognised at the time, still it is not too much to say that the question of Art was, after all, tacitly deemed the chief and most important ; and hence it was felt, that only very transitory and fitful advantages would result from that great undertaking, unless something like a permanent record of the contemporary progress of our own, as well as other countries, could be established. This result was, in fact,

universally desired, and hence Government, in our own case, granted a sum of money for the purchase of the selection of notable objects from the Great Exhibition, which formed the nucleus of this Museum, and thus, for the first time, perhaps has any serious attempt been made to forestall the expensive prestige of rarity and antiquity. But the teaching of the Department, of which this Museum was intended, in the first instance, to be only an integral part, necessitated an acquaintance with the art of previous ages, the scheme therefore was to aim at founding, as a comprehensive and complete unity, a collection which, whilst gradually accumulating and effectually preserving the treasures of past ages, should every day receive fresh acquisitions in the current productions of the period, thus illustrating and keeping pace with the progress of the age. The Institution would, in this way, form a complete authority and storehouse of knowledge in matters of Art-Industry during those tranquil intervals of progress and production, that intervene betwixt the great periodical gatherings, of which it is to be hoped the Exhibition of 1851 was but the first of a series.

I have hitherto confined my remarks to the subject of Museums in their relation to Art generally; let me now invite attention more specifically to our own Institution, with the view to explain, as far as I can, its immediate bearing and intention as regards—first, the Artist or student; secondly, the Manufacturer or pro-

ducer; and lastly, the Public generally. I will address myself, in the first place, to the students of the several schools and special classes of this Department. In the outset of my lecture I alluded to the unsatisfactory way in which the history of Art, or a knowledge of precedent works, was most frequently acquired; or, I should rather say, *not* acquired by the student. Now the obvious cause of this is, that the means and opportunities for such studies have hitherto been wanting in this country: with us the *atelier* system of individual teaching, which has been an effectual mode elsewhere, has never to any extent prevailed; and in fact, until a very recent period, that is to say, until the establishment of Government Schools of Design, there was literally no other teaching of the history and principles of Ornament in this country, but the meagre and desultory instruction afforded by the architect to his articulated pupils, aided in most cases by a very scanty library and a few miscellaneous casts, gathered together, in the first instance, rather as embellishments to the office than for purposes of study.

But even the slender amount of knowledge thus imparted was not available to the artist properly so called; and the designer for manufactures, to whom methodic instruction is indispensable, in default of assistance was obliged to depend upon a system of miserable, unintelligent copying, his only light being a sort of impure tradition handed down from one



to another, or a few stock motives picked up here and there at random; whilst of teaching, as betwixt master and pupil, in this branch of art, there was absolutely none. Now this state of things was very natural; illustrated works on Ornamental Art were very rare in our language, and public libraries, where alone such costly works might have been rendered accessible to the student, were still fewer in number. We have seen that our museums have almost ignored Art, as exhibited in industrial objects; and, finally, there is little in this country, setting aside the mere architectural details of our ecclesiastical structures, to catch the eye and arrest the attention of the artist: thus it is evident, that the chief sources of the knowledge I have adverted to were *nil*. Things, however, were different elsewhere, chiefly and mainly from the influence of ornamental works *in situ*, and from the silent but effectual teaching of Museums and Galleries of Art. In Italy there is, perhaps, as little direct teaching as anywhere; the Academies, like the Governments that support them, are effete and decaying, but still the monuments of Art are there in a thousand shapes; there are still the palaces and churches, abounding in ornament of all the great periods; there are still the great museums and the old-established galleries, accessible to all; and what has been the result?—that the best of all teaching, actual familiarity with the great models of style, has kept alive the old spirit of Art, so

that now even, the humblest decorator works in the spirit of a Giulio or a Polidoro.

I remember when in Venice, frequently meeting with a grey-headed old man crouched down on the pavements of the churches and elsewhere, busily at work with heel-ball and tracing-paper, copying the exquisite incised arabesques of the tombstones and tarsia work, which abound in that famous city, and on one day passing through a desecrated cloister, the shady arcades of which appeared to form a sort of market for the lower populace and the peasantry of the mainland, I found my old friend seated at a stall, cutting out in stiff paper, to serve as patterns for stencilling, the various designs he had traced: these were readily bought by the peasantry, who were in this way enabled to adorn their humble walls with the most exquisite ornamental designs of the great masters of the Cinque-cento. How completely this very fact explains that apparently intuitive good taste attributed to certain continental peoples, showing as it does, that they are rendered familiar from childhood with the most refined works of Art; whilst there is nothing equivalent in our own country, but rather a contrary and debasing influence from the all but universal prevalence of bad Art in similar conditions. But then London is not Venice; nor under the smoky skies of Manchester and Birmingham shall we perhaps ever see sculptures, arabesques, frescoes, and mosaics, in their original adaptations, such

as give a world-wide celebrity to the cities of the South ; but then we must content ourselves with gathering such things into museums, and treasuring up authentic records of them into libraries—such, in short, as those of this Department.

But to return to our immediate subject. How then is the student to be directly benefited by our Museum? In the first place, every facility consistent with the proper conservation of the several objects is afforded to all parties in making copies; a convenient apartment is provided for this purpose and, under certain regulations, articles may be taken from their cases and placed in the position most convenient for copying. In the case of the classes established for the teaching of specialties, the professors are empowered to select objects for removal to their class-rooms, and likewise for illustration of lectures. All registered students of the Department have free admission to the Museum, and it is expected that they will largely avail themselves of this privilege. Let us suppose the case of a student attending a course of teaching, or of lectures on the History of Ornament; his plan ought clearly to be, to come to the Museum and identify for himself the various manifestations of the several styles, which he will of course find actually developed in a hundred different vehicles, every one of which will teach him some special fact or other, with a minuteness and particularity, which it would be in vain to expect to acquire



otherwise. In connexion with this practice of minute observation he will most likely, in making himself acquainted with the contents of the library, find works wherein objects, whose counterparts he sees in the Museum, are illustrated and explained; he will make notes and references to them, whilst his pencil and sketch-book should be ever busy with the originals. After having studied the motives of ornament from casts or engravings, he will see these motives technically applied in different vehicles. He may observe, as a case in point, how the principles of relievo are carried out in various classes of objects; noticing how differences of material or the exigencies of processes have induced varieties of treatment: in some cases he will see relief ornament judiciously combined with coloured decoration, or with contrasted substances, as in inlays. In flat designs he will be able to note the juxtaposition of tone and colours, the proper treatment of surfaces in ornament, the grouping and distribution of rich decoration with simpler passages intended for contrast and repose; and thus, in an infinity of ways, gain that experience which at last will assume the appearance of intuitive power.

I trust the time will soon come, when every student of this Department will take an immediate and personal interest in every fresh acquisition, welcoming each instalment as a personal gain; for even if the increased interest and pleasure, which objects of Art give to the observer, from increasing knowledge, were the only

result of this study, I am sure that each individual would be amply repaid in the dissipation of that *ennui*, in other words, that apathy and indifference of ignorance, which is one of the greatest miseries of existence. Besides, the constant observation of things note-worthy in Art is the only way of fostering that universality of grasp, which is the highest attribute of true genius.

Let us take now the case of a student of any of the special classes of this Department, say of the class for porcelain painting or for textile decoration,—in the fine collection of pottery already got together the student of the former class has an advantage, the importance of which it is impossible to over-estimate. He may at once see every process, every minute peculiarity of the art, and even every prominent individual mannerism, set before him, with a world of special circumstances of illustration and comparison; an opportunity, it should be recollected, with which the producers of the majority of these works were themselves never favoured. In the textile section, after listening to the precepts of the professor, after being made acquainted with the true principles of designing for woven fabrics, the student will find in the beautiful and ample collection of Oriental stuffs, these principles carried out with the utmost intuitive taste and technical perfection; whilst in the mediæval and modern examples, together with much that is equally instructive, he may sometimes see instances of erro-

neous treatment. It would be easy to carry illustrations of this kind much further, and to show how, in every specialty, various classes of works are necessary for reference and example, but even the slight indications here given will, I think, suffice to show, that museums are indispensable adjuncts to all technical instruction: it is certain that the necessity for collections was felt immediately on the formation of the classes at Marlborough House, and indeed I think there can be no doubt, but that a museum of specimens is as necessary a complement to the studies of the industrial artist, as the laboratory to the chemist, the observatory to the astronomer, or the dissecting-room to the medical student.

Let us now see in what way the manufacturer will find his account. In this country, unfortunately, the manufacturer is influenced too exclusively by the merely mercantile element; there is, or should be however, a marked difference betwixt the manufacturer and the merchant. The manufacturer should possess, in addition to the entire body of technical knowledge in his special branch, a certain amount of taste and artistic culture, at least if his productions are of an ornamental description; but the merchant is, at any rate, supposed to be immediately concerned only with the pecuniary value of his wares. To a considerable extent then, what has been said in the case of the artist or designer, will apply also to the manufacturer. There are other



points, however, which especially concern this latter: it is for him to take the initiative in all novelties of production; it is he who in reality "*sets the fashion*," and not the public themselves: for it is not correct to say, as is constantly urged in defence of bad taste, that the public *will have* certain things, and that the general expression of the public will compel the producer to follow certain objectionable styles. This is a fallacy; the public have no means of taking the initiative in matters of taste, they must perforce choose amongst the patterns set before them by the manufacturer, and I maintain that they do generally make a judicious choice; that is to say, when all are too frequently bad, they take the least objectionable. If the foregoing facts are granted, it follows, that unless the manufacturer is content to lend himself without concern, to the continuance of a low and degrading general *status* as regards Art, he is bound to avail himself of every means of improving his own taste and knowledge; as it is, there can be no doubt of the shortcomings of manufacturers. In this respect, an acquaintance with Art is the exception, rather than the rule, and indeed so completely does this hold good, that it is no uncommon thing to find manufacturers unable even to discriminate betwixt the different value of the artistic talent at their command, and instead of directing and assisting the really talented artist in his endeavours to secure in his patterns a combi-

nation of true excellence with novelty, discourage and discountenance him, by capriciously preferring the inferior labours of ignorant competitors, original, it may be, in their very absurdity; and that too not unfrequently, on the false supposition before referred to, of the incapacity of the public to appreciate really correct productions.

Good taste, it is true, is a rare quality; and manufacturers, in particular, should not be singled out and reproached for the lack of it. But to judge of novelty and originality demands knowledge, and no excuse can be admitted for the non-acquisition of this. It may be urged here that originality, as likewise a just appreciation of artistic excellence in the abstract, is more likely to be achieved by those who are unacquainted with previous works, and are so untrammelled by any preconceived bias. This is an error; indeed it is admitted, that there are no more slavish copyists, more hopeless mannerists, than self-taught people; and, unfortunately, manufacturers generally are in this latter category. How extremely valuable, then, to such a class must be a collection like the present, in which all the prominent developments of industrial art are brought together for study and comparison. Even in the present elementary state of our collections, I have no hesitation in saying that the intelligent manufacturer, in no matter what branch, would find amongst the various objects exhibited much that would be new to him, and a mul-

titude of useful suggestions. In giving expression to this last word, *suggestions*, I am reminded that here is the true source of novelty. I do not believe in discoveries in Art; like everything else in the world, Art is of progressive growth, and novelties do not spring up like the men all armed from Cadmus' dragons' teeth sown broad-cast. *No; they branch out from previous novelties*, and so he who knows the most will be the most original.

Following my previous enumeration of interests concerned in Art teaching, there remains lastly to be considered the public in general. Now the public in general have already manifested their interest by the crowded attendance on those days when our Museum is freely opened to them, and already that character of ignorant apathy, so universally imputed to English people by travelled connoisseurs, is being practically refuted. But it is not to the general public of the metropolis alone that our Museum is addressed; and it will perhaps be as well that I should waive the consideration of the specific advantages resulting to the general community, such advantages being, in fact, self-evident to every reflecting mind, and take this opportunity of pointing out how the influence of this Institution may be made directly and practically useful to all parts of the kingdom. It is true, that in these days of universal locomotion a metropolitan institution is, in great measure, available to all; but, at the same time,



there can be no doubt but that the minor centres of intelligence and population are entitled to the benefit of special collections, and it is to be hoped that the advances in this direction, wisely made of late years by Government, will be soon met in a more liberal spirit by local authoritative bodies. Whenever this is the case, I have little doubt but that the widely-established relations of the Department of Science and Art will enable it to render good service in this movement. Presupposing the gradual and rapid increase of this Museum, the time will soon come when the experience acquired by those who have the management of it, as well in the business of the acquisition of specimens as in their classification and other practical arrangements, will be such as to be of the greatest value in all new undertakings of the same nature; and it is almost certain that Provincial Museums, as has already been found to be the case in France, will mainly assume the shape of Art Collections. In the meantime, there is already a definite prospect of usefulness in this direction—it is in the accumulation of duplicates and superfluous specimens. Our Museum even now possesses a number of such objects, which would be available for distribution to local collections; and it is to be hoped that, before long even, some mutually advantageous system for effecting this will be devised. Finally, I would refer to the example already so successfully set by the Department in the institution of special ex-

hibitions, got together by means of loans from private collectors, and the practice, now well established, of adding to the attractions of the permanent collections by this means. Sanctioned as this practice has been by the noble liberality and encouragement of Her Majesty the Queen and her august Consort, an impetus has thus been given which will doubtless in time bear good fruit elsewhere; and this feature, so particularly applicable in the country, possible and feasible indeed everywhere, will doubtless be largely carried out in Provincial Collections. Here also the metropolitan establishment might assist local endeavours, and, in short, in many other ways conduce to the success of institutions bound to it by identity of purpose, if not by closer relations.

It is difficult here to avoid entering upon a variety of fresh topics, which would lead me far beyond my limits. I would, however, in conclusion, dwell for a brief space on the Educational import of Museums; for, after all, this in its literal, practical sense, is the main aspect of our collection. Education at the present day is wisely held to be a term of infinitely wider import than was formerly allowed—reading, writing and arithmetic, grammar and logic, with the rudiments of foreign languages,—the ancient pedagogue's sum and substance of all instruction,—are now justly appreciated at their true value, as the mere means of knowledge. The school-boy having mastered these

rudiments is prepared to go into the world, and acquire a certain amount of that "*general information*," for such we modestly term the immense aggregation of knowledge beyond the jurisdiction of schools, of which in this age it is not allowable to be ignorant. There is, in fact, a striking difference betwixt *scholarship* and *learning*, and society is now beginning to feel that for men who have to live, and move, and act in the outer world, rather than in the closet or the classroom, the old education will not suffice. *Libraries, Museums, Galleries*, even shops and workshops,—these too are schools, it is felt that the eye should be trained to seize and appreciate, and the intellect to grasp and judge at once, not merely the memory be charged to repletion whilst every other faculty languishes.

It is my sincere conviction that society, and indeed individuals, can no longer afford to neglect these new schools. *Ignorance in literature, ignorance in art, ignorance even of technical knowledge*, will soon be *loss of caste, loss of happiness, loss of money*; for all these qualities and possessions are relative, and ever-changing in degree, and he who changes not in this age of progress will soon be hopelessly distanced!